

## The Race for Hafiz: Scholarly and Popular Translations at the *Fin de Siècle*

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### Abstract:

The great Persian lyric poet Hafiz was first translated into English by Sir William Jones in the 1780s. In the course of the nineteenth century many further translations would appear, initially intended for the use of oriental scholars and students of the Persian language, but increasingly also for the general reading public. The paraphraser or ‘popularizers’ who devised the latter category of translation competed with professional scholars to shape the dissemination and popular perception of Persian poetry. Owing to a variety of factors, the middle of the nineteenth century saw a marked decline in the number of new Hafiz translations, and it is not until 1891 that a complete edition of Hafiz’s works finally appeared in English. This led to an unusual situation, particular to Britain, in which scholars (Edward H. Palmer, Henry Wilberforce-Clarke, Gertrude Bell), and popularizers (Richard Burton, Herman Bicknell, Justin McCarthy, Richard Le Gallienne, John Payne) all jostled to fill the vacuum created by the absence of a definitive version. Their competition created, in short order, a diversity of versions presented to consumers, which allowed Hafiz’s influence to be felt in twentieth-century poetry untrammelled by the impress (as became the case with Omar Khayyam) of one dominant translator. While the refraction of Hafiz through the biases and predispositions of multiple translators has been regarded as hopelessly distorting by Julie Scott Meisami, I argue instead that it highlights lyric, in the richness and diversity characteristic of Hafiz, as the Persian poetic mode which has been more influential on English writing and yet the most difficult to categorize and integrate. Lastly, by paying heed to the popular transmission of Hafiz in English, we might better understand the reception of Persian poetry in its *generic*, rather than only its *formal* character.

**Keywords:** Hafez; Hafiz; translation; popularization; reading; Le Gallienne

Khwāja Shams-ud-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥāfiẓ-e Shīrāzī (1315-1390), known by his *takhallus* or pen-name Hafiz, stands at the apex of classical Persian writers. He is celebrated for the richness and subtlety of his lyric voice, his memorable imagery, the changeful variety of his moods and ideas –

which encompass the ironic and satiric, the romantic, elegiac and ecstatic – and for the ambiguity of his poems in which it is hard, even counter-productive, to draw distinctions between earthly sensation and experience and what may be taken as metaphorical and metaphysical. He has been, by all accounts, underserved by his English interlocutors.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the excitement triggered by William Jones' early, fragmentary renderings of Persian poetry in the 1770s, a full translation of Hafiz's *Divan* or complete poems did not appear until 1891, full eighty years after its German equivalent was issued by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall.<sup>2</sup> With von Hammer's volumes at his side, Goethe was much better placed to write his lyrical tribute to Hafiz, the *West-östlicher Divan* (1819), than English contemporaries who – had they no German – knew the poet only in extracts. And although various British and American poets have imitated Hafiz and engaged with his work imaginatively, it is perhaps partly owing to a want of reliable and inspirational sources that none have even approached Goethe's literary achievement.

If nothing comparable to the *West-östlicher Divan* (1819) has arisen from the interest in and affinity for Hafiz felt by English-speaking poets, I would suggest that Anglophone responses to the great lyricist may interest us for other characteristics: namely their volume, their diversity, their origins in a mixture of rivalry and collaborative production, and in several cases their eccentric deviation from the mainstream of established scholarly interpretation. The contrast with Germany is striking: a keyword search for 'Hafis' (and variant spellings) on the catalogue of the Berlin State Library returns only three items between the years 1820 and 1915 – among them the *Sänger von Schiras* (Singer of Shiraz) by Friedrich Bodenstedt, another considerable talent best known in his lifetime for translating the *Lieder* of the possibly fictitious Mirza Schaffy. Though it does not include in its number such outstanding writers as Goethe and Bodenstedt, the English cohort (see Fig. 1 below) is almost four times as large. Moreover, it is densely clustered together in only half the period of time, from 1875 up to the First World War. Why this rapid multiplication of Hafiz translations at the *fin de siècle*, with no single version taking evident priority over the others? In this article I will explain how this phenomenon came about, using the examples of Louisa Costello, who conceived the first popular English anthology of Persian poetry in 1845, and the most commercially successful translator from Hafiz in the late Victorian period, Richard Le Gallienne. Their popular translation practice was consciously defined against that of qualified scholars, but I also aim to show how it was shaped by the expectations of their readership, and how the task of interpreting lyric – as opposed to other genres of poetry – for a general audience imposed a

particular burden to credibly voice or embody one's subject. Ultimately, the failure of any one translator to achieve an authoritative position in the interpretation of Hafiz has created a diffuse English tradition defined by its shortcomings, but also by its diversity and ongoing potential for novelty.

## ORIENTALISM AFTER JONES

Observing the apparent dearth of Hafiz translations in the middle part of the century, compared to its end, Julie Scott Meisami did not dwell on the causes of the latter. But she concluded definitively that the former was the result of initial excitement, stimulated by the translations of Sir William Jones, subsiding into apathy. In 1809 we may easily infer that Hafiz's name was one known to most cultured people, looking no farther than Lord Byron's indignation upon discovering the pseudonym that the poetaster Robert Stott had adopted in his pieces for the *Morning Post*: 'what would be the sentiments of the Persian Anacreon, Hafiz, could he rise from his splendid sepulchre at Sheeraz [...] and behold his name assumed by one Stott of Dromore, the most impudent and execrable of literary poachers for the Daily Prints?'<sup>3</sup> In Meisami's view, it was Jones's intention that Hafiz should be considered very much after the manner in which Byron positions him: alongside, though not inferior to, the poets of Greek and Roman antiquity and as integral a part of Europe's cultural ancestry. This hope however would be frustrated by the advent of a 'neo-Classical aesthetics' inherently resistant to the notion of seeing East and West within a joint tradition. If Jones's Romantic sensibilities had attracted him to Hafiz, then his neo-Classical successors were more likely to sympathize with the moral and didactic qualities of Sa'di and the stately narrative of Firdausi. In Germany, where such prejudices did not predominate, Hafiz continued to be translated.<sup>4</sup> Though Meisami confines her discussion to Europe, the same might have been suggested of the United States, where periodicals carried translations from Hafiz through the course of the nineteenth century, and where he found one of his greatest advocates in Emerson.<sup>5</sup>

Without contesting Meisami's reading of Jones, I would like to identify some other factors contributing to Hafiz's apparent neglect which are easier to define and measure than shifts in the aesthetic zeitgeist. Firstly, a book historian's response: there were a number of Hafiz translations produced in the early nineteenth century, mainly intended as cribs for learners of Persian, and

however slight and fragmentary a selection they offered, they continued to circulate and be sold long after their original publication. Bernard Quaritch, London's celebrated Oriental bookseller, was still stocking Nott's (1787) and Hindley's (1800) versions of Hafiz in the 1880s.<sup>6</sup> Arguably by that advanced date these items were becoming curious rarities, but even so their longevity was considerable. In 1843 they were certainly apprehended as rivals for market share by one George Abingdon of Brighton, who wrote to the poet Thomas Moore asking his opinion as to whether 'a new translation of Hafiz would at the present moment be well received'.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, the publication of translations largely depended on the priorities of the East India Company and the Oriental Translation Fund, which it sponsored. If Hafiz could be used for learning the Persian language, Sa'di's *Gulistan* and the *Shahnameh* of Firdausi were thought to more readily offer the kinds of insight into history, politics, religion, and 'Eastern' ethics and mores that were considered instructive for the young cadets training to serve the Company as judges and district officers. When the qualities of discursive, didactic and heroic writing come to be regarded as holding a greater *intrinsic* value for readers than lyric poetry, quite apart from its informational content, then we might detect the influence of the neo-classical aesthetics that Meisami makes such claims for. It is notable, for example, that when in 1886 Sir John Lubbock came to create his influential list of the one hundred best books (or those books 'most worth reading' as he phrased it), he chose the epic *Shahnameh* as his one Persian item. In the ensuing press discussion, the explorer and journalist Henry Morton Stanley suggested that he might also have included 'Saadi', referring presumably to the *Gulistan*.<sup>8</sup> Both texts were evidently considered by Stanley to be more representative of Persia, its history and its people than the odes of Hafiz. Nonetheless it was the priorities of imperial rule that informed this choice, and that had been indirectly responsible in the first place for bringing these texts to Lubbock and Stanley's attention, as much as either man's 'neoclassical' aesthetic preferences.

But if we can indeed detect a mid-century dip of interest in Hafiz amongst Oriental scholars and officials, brought about by various factors, it by no means follows that an equivalent decline affected dilettantes, and the kind of non-expert reader who had eagerly browsed the works of Jones during the previous generation. Meisami is rather sceptical of non-professional translators. In fact, she regrets that during the course of the nineteenth century translation in Britain, lacking the 'philological rigour' that prevailed on the Continent, 'became increasingly the province of the amateur'.<sup>9</sup> This is firstly untrue: as the century progressed, translation became ever more a

professionalized industry and the commercial concerns of publishers, rather than the whims and curiosity of individual writers, took priority in determining what was translated and in what manner.<sup>10</sup> But more importantly, it overlooks the idiosyncratic contributions that Annmarie Drury has highlighted (in particular the ‘signal achievement’ of Edward FitzGerald) made by amateur translators, in their efforts to give an English shape and sound to Persian poetry.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, it also overlooks the lay reader at whom amateur translations were usually targeted. One of the most instructive instances of such a translation was a book that appeared at the very midpoint of this three decades’ seeming disregard for Hafiz, *The Rose Garden of Persia* (1845).

The *Rose Garden*’s originator, Louisa Stuart Costello (1799-1870) was the orphan of an Irish army officer who was obliged to support herself through a wide variety of opportunistic literary projects.<sup>12</sup> Her knowledge of French and German opened to her the pages of continental scholars like von Hammer and Garcin de Tassy, and while completely untrained in Persian, she tentatively asked the Orientalist H. H. Wilson to check the spelling of the Hafiz couplet that appears on her title page. The book, she explained to him, ‘gives biographies and specimens of Persian poets, merely for the English reader, but I think a great Oriental scholar like yourself will not disdain the attempt to do honour to his favourites, even though the unskilful should presume to do so’.<sup>13</sup> It is effectively the first popular anthology designed to give the non-expert a general overview of Persian poetry. Selecting short excerpts that she judges most likely to appeal, Costello edited and rewrote her material (sometimes turning prose into verse), ordered her extracts by poet and subject (e.g. ‘On True Worth’, ‘In Praise of Wine’), and added light-touch historical context and explanatory notes on Hafiz, Firdausi, Nizami, Jami, Rumi, Attar and other major writers. The resulting volume is in three respects exemplary of Victorian popular translation: it is conceived wholly for the general reader and was taken up by the mainstream press of Longman; it is appealingly ornamented, with arabesque designs created by Costello’s brother Dudley; and it is consciously representative, offering its reader no haphazard harvest, but a cohort of sixteen major poets that gives a superficial but effective crash-course in the Persian literary canon.

Though she adapted material from some dozen Oriental scholars (who are acknowledged in an appendix), Jones and his achievement was a particular touchstone for Costello. The Romantic orientophile, enamoured of the ‘religious and poetical fire’ of Persian writing, presented an example by which she could justify her own editorial activity, apologizing for her ignorance of the language while implicitly offering as compensation a naïve enthusiasm and ardour that exceeds

that of any professional scholar.<sup>14</sup> Her veneration for Jones is particularly evident in her treatment of Hafiz, a poet ‘whose *name*’, she remarks with italic emphasis, is widely recognized in Britain but whose works are not yet sufficiently known.

The endless variety of the poems of Hafiz, their brilliancy, energy, and originality, are so striking, that, as Sir W. Jones justly remarks, it is difficult to select specimens; so replete with surpassing beauty, thought, feeling, and expression, are they... The grace, ease, and fancy of his numbers are inimitable, like those of our own poet Moore; and there is a magic in his lays which few, even of his professed enemies, have been able to resist.<sup>15</sup>

Costello’s terms of praise – ‘energy’, ‘originality’, ‘brilliancy’, ‘fancy’, ‘magic’ – are recognizably Romantic, and contrast tellingly with the neoclassical diction used by James Atkinson in the preface to his abridged *Shahnameh* of 1832, to describe the poem’s ‘chivalrous spirit and pathetic denouement’, and the ‘grandeur’ of its ‘exquisitely smooth and flowing’ verses.<sup>16</sup> Her reference to Moore, a correspondent and patron, also reveals the chief tools at her disposal: the abundance of metres and stanza forms in his *Irish Melodies*, which she borrowed in order to impart a songful and vital quality to her renditions. It cannot be irrelevant, moreover, that Moore was an émigré Irishman and Costello the daughter of one. In the creation of her anthology the judgement of what was most distinctively *national* in Persian writing was a constant concern, just as it was for academic Persianists of the day like Edward Byles Cowell. But in a period when professional scholars were occupied with positioning Firdausi as the father of Persian writing, Costello’s predisposition favoured the lyric voice, and reflected the Romantic attraction to minstrelsy and traditional performance. She conceives Hafiz as a kind of bard – not in the sense of a narrative poet, but of a lyricist in the Greek tradition of one who sang to the *lyre*. Although he composed no music, Hafiz is thus figured as a poet with musical affinities: an author of ‘lays’, whose graceful ‘numbers’ have been often set to ‘Eastern airs’, a distinction he shares with his ‘brother minstrel’ Moore. ‘There is not a Persian’, she adds, underscoring the national character of this poetry, ‘whose heart does not echo his strains.’<sup>17</sup>

Consequently, the bulk of Costello’s selections for the *Rose Garden* comprise philosophic odes, allegorical descriptions of nature, and poetry on the great lovers of Persian legend, such as Leila and Majnun or Khusro and Shirin. Even her selections from the *Shahnameh* are governed by

this lyric bias, with much the largest extract being related to the courtship of Jamshid, in preference to the story of Sohrab and Rustum or any of the other heroic and tragic episodes in the great epic. The figuration of Hafiz as melodious, songful and pastoral, ‘the Persian Anacreon’ as Byron would have him, is as problematic as any other attempt to fit him to a European pattern. It is noteworthy though that Costello only confirms that it was ‘in that character’ that he composed the *kasidah* and *ghazals* in her selection – thus allowing, it would seem, that he possessed more than one poetic identity. And even if she did choose to emphasize this ‘character’ over any others, it is important to appreciate how popular writers like Costello kept alive this version of Hafiz through the course of the century, and how he is a personage that subsequent interpreters must negotiate if they would address themselves to a non-expert readership.

## POPULAR VERSUS SCHOLARLY TRANSLATIONS

Louisa Costello was among the first of a new species of Oriental translator, one who did not work from the source language at all, but from existing English (and in her case also French and German) versions with an eye not to specialist and professional readers but the general public. Those scholars who had laboured in the first half of the century to elucidate classic works in Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit and other languages became, in its second half, a ready quarry for these *soi-disant* ‘popularizers’, whose commercial publications did much to bring such texts as the *Bhagavad Gita* or the Tang Dynasty poets into the frame of general cultural reference. By this stage, tenured Orientalists too were increasingly keen to find an audience beyond their academic peers, and this naturally brought them into competition, if not conflict, with the popular writers who in some cases were paraphrasing their existing work. The case of Hafiz offers one of the most revealing examples of collusive and competitive jostling on the part of scholarly translators and popularizers. As we have already seen, he was familiar at least by name to the early-nineteenth-century readers who had the means and inclination to dip into the thirteen-volume *Works of Sir William Jones*, or into any of a number of periodicals where Persian literature was mentioned. Yet despite the situation wherein Hafiz and Hafizian clichés (cups of Shirazi wine borne by attendant *sakis* in the grove of Mosellay, etc.) were common currency, to acquire a thorough knowledge of the poet, and to view his work as a whole instead of in fragments, was impossible for anyone unlettered in German, even long after the advent of Costello’s *Rose Garden*. Not until 1891 did Henry Wilberforce Clarke, an

officer in the Royal Engineers, supply the first complete English edition of Hafiz's *Diwan*, or collected works – thirty years after Rosenzweig-Schwannau's parallel-text translation, the *second* to appear in German, was printed at Vienna.

This excessive delay created an unusual situation, whereby not only was a popular, accessible Hafiz unavailable to English readers, but even a standard scholarly text was still wanting. This omission did not go unremarked. Indeed, the correspondence of mid-century Persianists gives the sense almost of a race to produce the definitive edition for the next generation. Or, to put it less strongly, the field was in flux, weakly policed and open to all-comers. In 1867, an undergraduate named Edward Henry Palmer walked into the London offices of the *Argosy* magazine and told the sub-editor that he was at work on two volumes. 'Through intermixture of biography, criticism, and translation', he explained, 'he hoped to do something to make English readers really interested in the Persian and Arabic poets'. As a token of this ambition, Palmer published in the *Argosy* a sample of Hafiz in verse which the sub-editor considered remarkable for its 'flow and felicity', and its success in realizing the Persian lyrics 'by a cunning process of transfusion to which only the select attain'.<sup>18</sup> Palmer must have been conscious of this periodical's distinctly middlebrow air, and though he would ultimately ascend to a professorial chair at Cambridge, his choice of outlet reflects an appetite for popular success that never quite left him. A decade later, the two volumes he originally projected in the *Argosy* office had resolved themselves into a more focused expostulation of Hafiz, specifically. As a prospectus issued by Trübner & Co. announced, 'strange as it may appear, no *popular or complete* translation of [his works] has as yet appeared in any European language. In our own country, he is known only through the loose and now almost forgotten versions of single poems by Sir William Jones, Nott, and Hindley'.<sup>19</sup>

Had it attained fruition, Palmer's would most probably have become the standard text, but his untimely death in 1883 curtailed the project. In the meantime, Hermann Bicknell had brought out in 1875 the first edition whose primary purpose was *not* the study of the Persian language. It is an attractive compilation of forty-two odes with Costello-style ornamented borders and diverting extras, such as a prospect of the valley of Shiraz, dotted with labels to indicate places mentioned in the poems.<sup>20</sup> This small selection, however, only partially filled the vacuum. Some surviving notes suggest that Richard Burton (who owned both a copy of Bicknell, picked up for two shillings sixpence, and one of Palmer's prospectuses) was considering Hafiz as a project before committing his efforts to the *Arabian Nights*.<sup>21</sup> The most commercially successful Victorian popularizer of



Asian literature, Edwin Arnold, also jotted down lines from Hafiz, Nizami and others – though he ultimately opted in his Persian ventures for an adaptation from Jami (*Potiphar's Wife*, 1892), and a new version of Sa'di's *Gulistan* (1899).<sup>22</sup>

In the absence of these heavyweights, the field was left open to the most narrow-purposed, even dry-as-dust specialists and the most unabashed of dabblers. Representing the former was Wilberforce Clarke, the army officer whose complete *diwan* of 1891 was printed at his own expense on the Government Press in Calcutta. Clarke was a member of British India's declining population of Persianists, and his edition – 1200 pages and 'laden with notes', as he wrote proudly to one of his patrons – gave no quarter to the layman.<sup>23</sup> His preface tabulates the different metres used by Hafiz, and what proportion of his oeuvre each accounts for; all previous translators are listed, and the number of poems they interpreted also tabulated. The translation itself, in shapeless prose, is constantly interrupted by footnotes and parenthetical insertions that gloss the symbolic meaning of various words and images. But daunting as it was, Clarke's edifice was soon broken down and ruthlessly mined for a popular rendition, *Ghazels from the Divan Of Hafiz* by Justin Huntly McCarthy (1893), followed in 1903 by Richard Le Gallienne's *Odes from the Divan of Hafiz*. Both men were entirely candid about their reliance on another's labours and their own meagre knowledge of Persian, the latter even going so far as to imply, in his preface, that ignorance of the original equipped him better to preserve the spirit of 'joy' in which Hafiz should be read.<sup>24</sup> In fact, Le Gallienne had turned to Clarke's volumes on the explicit recommendation of McCarthy, one dilettante tipping off another: '[it] would be the most useful book for you. Good it is not, but you might suck good out of it.'<sup>25</sup>

## A DECADENT HAFIZ: LE GALLIENNE AND HIS READERS

Meisami remarks that 'the history of Ḥāfiz translations can be viewed [...] as the history of an exercise, or a series of exercises, in cultural and literary appropriation'.<sup>26</sup> The form which that appropriation has taken has been determined by one of a variety of agendas that individual translators have served. While Clarke interpreted Hafiz through a Sufistic lens, regarding his frequent references to wine and beautiful adolescents in a strictly symbolic light, McCarthy and Le Gallienne were eager to portray him as a sceptical hedonist. In this effort, both men were influenced by prevailing *fin-de-siècle* aesthetics, and by a desire to cling to the coat-tails of Edward

FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. In fact, both men had produced their own versions of Khayyam (in 1889 and 1897, respectively) before tackling Hafiz, and on Le Gallienne's part there seems to have been a sense of graduation from the well-rehearsed truisms of the astronomer-poet to the complexity of the great lyricist, with his much more central position in the Persian canon.

Le Gallienne was especially keen to make headway in America, where the dramatic rise of 'Omar' as a commercial phenomenon and literary cult had, in fact, begun before being propagated in Europe. Here he perhaps hoped to find ready converts to a similar cult of Hafiz. His *Odes* could even be called American poems. The work appeared in New York two years before its publication in London and coincided with the author's own permanent relocation from Britain to the United States, where it was promoted by his frequent lectures and public readings. Addressing the American press, Le Gallienne used expansive and exuberant language. Drawing a contrast with Khayyam, 'a philosophical epigrammatist', he praised the 'lyrical volume' of Hafiz – 'Hafiz's work is larger, nobler. His creations are big lyrical odes'.<sup>27</sup> This billowing spirit is evident in his rendition of Ode 49, which has a Whitmanesque lilt (a quality seen not at all, ironically, in Whitman's own 'A Persian Lesson' of 1891). Here is an excerpt from Clarke, replete with sufistic glosses, alongside the corresponding lines in Le Gallienne:

Now that in the palm of the rose (the holy traveller), is the cup of pure wine (borrowed  
worldly existence),

In its praise, is the bulbul (the flattering Friend) with a hundred thousand tongues.

Seek the book of verse (truths and subtleties) and make way to the desert (choose solitude):  
( 'Tis the time of justice.) What time is this for the College, and the argument of the Kashf-  
i-Kashshāf?<sup>28</sup>

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Now that the rose-tree in its dainty hand  
Lifts high its brimming cup of blood-red wine,  
And green buds thicken o'er the empty land,  
Heart, leave these speculations deep of thine,  
And seek the grassy wilderness with me.

Who cares for problems, human or divine!  
The dew of morning glitters like a sea,  
And hearken how yon happy nightingale  
Tells with his hundred thousand new-found tongues  
Over again the old attractive tale.

Yea, close thy books; let schools and schoolmen be;  
Only a little lazy book of songs  
Snatch up, and take the long green road with me.<sup>29</sup>

To better understand what Le Gallienne is doing with Clarke here, it is helpful to try and read his text through the eyes of two early-twentieth-century readers. The last three lines in the excerpt above were marginally highlighted by the typographer Richard Williamson Ellis (b. 1895), one of a number of American readers represented in a collection of Le Gallienne's books kept at Temple University in Philadelphia.<sup>30</sup> Judging from the ticks and marginal lining Ellis has added to the volume, he responded to the vitality and Romanticism of the bardic Hafiz presented by Le Gallienne – a transformation seen very plainly in this pairing, where Le Gallienne's use of the imagery supplied to him by Clarke cuts directly against the latter's own symbolic exposition. 'Yon happy nightingale' that beckons the scholar to shut up his *Kashf-i-Kashshāf* (a Quranic commentary) and instead glory in the first blooms of spring is, for Clarke, the flattering voice of the material world. The joy it gives to the senses is not the antidote to lifeless scholastic dispute. Rather, *both* things distract the poet from his proper sphere of solitary contemplation.

The other passages favoured by Ellis have undergone the same process of revision: the first four lines of Ode 83 ('O Love, all hidden from my aching sight'), lines 6-10 in Ode 254 ('Twere a sad world without a lover's voice'), and in particular Ode 74 ('Love is a sea that hath not any shore'). This ode also caught the eye of the businessman Francis Kettaneh, who possessed several titles by Le Gallienne now in the Temple collection. The marks Kettaneh has left in his copy of the *Odes* cluster in those areas where the voice of Le Gallienne, impish and provocatively modern, is to the fore, and the Decadent postures he strikes in the costume of Hafiz particularly visible. 'If you are kind, thank God that it is so; / If you are good—don't let your neighbours know', are lines that exemplify the self-conscious, even self-satirical manner in which Le Gallienne advertises to his

reader an equivalence between his own personality and that of the medieval Persian.<sup>31</sup> This performative aspect of his translation was reflected in the frequent public readings the tall, striking, long-haired poet gave throughout the United States, sometimes to audiences apparently composed almost wholly of women.<sup>32</sup> Though it is hard to say precisely how much of his private life the typical reader was able to gather from newspaper gossip, the *Odes* certainly offers an opening for readers to identify certain poems with the circumstances of Hafiz's life, and simultaneously with his translator's. Le Gallienne adds footnotes to Odes 227 and 598, linking them biographically to the death of Hafiz's wife, and to Ode 606 identifying it as an elegy for a son lost in infancy. Kettaneh's reading of these poems (he appears to have worked his way through the book thoroughly), and the line he drew alongside 606, take on a different dimension if we consider that he may have known of the death of Le Gallienne's first wife Mildred during childbirth in 1894, and of another death that took place in New York during work on the *Odes* – that of a baby boy he fathered with his lover Veda, to whom the volume is dedicated.<sup>33</sup> Though Hafiz is distorted and even 'diminished' in these reworkings, or 'imitations' as Parvin Loloï terms them, like McCarthy before him Le Gallienne 'has discovered a philosophic and poetic stance – as much his own invention as objectively present in the Persian poet – which has enabled him to articulate his own view of his own times.'<sup>34</sup>

That Kettaneh enjoyed Hafiz in Le Gallienne's English, when he almost certainly spoke French, very probably Arabic and perhaps other Middle Eastern languages, is revealing of the range of appeal that popular translations could elicit. He was born in Lebanon in 1897, entered the American University at Beirut in 1914, founded a transport and trading concern with outposts in Damascus, Baghdad and Tehran, and emigrated to the United States during the Second World War.<sup>35</sup> Le Gallienne and McCarthy may have presented a simplistic and selective view of Hafiz, focussing solely on the *ghazals* and amplifying as much as possible the romantic or erotic side of a multifaceted poet. Unlike Clarke and Bicknell, phlegmatic servants of the British Raj, they also thoroughly expurgated homoerotic content. But on the other hand, their cheap and portable books (McCarthy's paraphrase was released duodecimo size in England, and sextodecimo in the USA where it was priced at a reasonable \$2), cumbered with few footnotes but much blank page, offer a space for readers to encounter the lyrics on their own terms, free of editorial intervention.<sup>36</sup> And this is a particularly important consideration to bear in mind in the case of Middle Eastern or South Asian readers, who may well have viewed Clarke's parentheses and diacritics with suspicion, as

the apparatus of standardization assembled by a colonial official. Le Gallienne's version of Omar Khayyam was generally disparaged by critics in both Britain and America.<sup>37</sup> Yet not only was it by far the most widely read version after FitzGerald's,<sup>38</sup> but also the version the Bengali writer and barrister Pramatha Chaudhuri asked his friend Indira Devi to lend him during a spell of ennui in 1898:

Would you mind taking a little trouble for me? Could you send me Le Gallienne's translation of Omar Khayyam?... In this house there's no book of any kind... Only there is a Shelley here... I can't abide Shelley now. All that I now want to look away from, to forget – unbearable emotion, unfulfilled longing – Shelley is stuffed full with that... I know I will like Omar Khayyam; why? – well, I can't exactly tell why, but I feel I would.<sup>39</sup>

Chaudhuri was hankering for more than verbal engagement. He wanted the company of a dead poet – in this case Khayyam's company, and not Shelley's – and he presumably felt Le Gallienne's version was a more conducive medium for that desired encounter than the readily available FitzGerald. As we have seen Le Gallienne habitually evaded questions as to his competency by implying that his subjective approach was necessary to recover the historical personality of the author from the abstractions of scholarship. 'The total result of his endeavour is really – if not literally – Hafiz', claimed the publisher's prospectus for *Odes from the Divan*.<sup>40</sup> But in spite of the distortion and inaccuracy it involved, we will not comprehend the full influence of this translation practice unless we appreciate the expectations of readers, who when reading what they understood as lyric (a genre defined in ancient Greece, we recalled earlier, by its musical accompaniment) wanted to *hear* the poet's voice embodied by a modern interlocutor.

## AN OPEN MARKET

Every other interpreter – or appropriator, to use Meisami's terms – of Hafiz contemporary with Le Gallienne shaped their exercise around personal views and goals, or for an intended audience defined by gender, class or level of education. The minor Pre-Raphaelite poet John Payne followed Le Gallienne in striving, to an obsessive extent, to link individual odes to the circumstances of Hafiz's life, whereas the banker-turned-classicist Walter Leaf cared nothing for biography but

sought to replicate Persian prosody in English with painstaking correctness. Both appealed to elite, coterie readerships while the quarrelsome pair Syed Abdul Majid and Launcelot Cranmer-Byng edited a one-shilling edition (emphasizing Hafiz as ‘the most national’ of Persian poets), and Gertrude Bell began her elegant version as a purely private exercise in language study.<sup>41</sup>

*Figure 1: English Editions of Hafiz, published in Britain, the USA, and India (1875-1910)*

- Herman Bicknell, *Hafiz of Shiraz, Selections from his Poems* (London: Trübner, 1875)
- Samuel Robinson, *A Century of Ghazels, or a Hundred Odes, Selected and Translated from the Diwan of Hafiz* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1875)
- W. H. Lowe, *Twelve Odes of Hafiz Done Literally into English* (Cambridge: Spalding, 1877)
- Henry Wilberforce Clarke, *The Divan, Written in the Fourteenth Century, by Khwaja Shamsu-d-Din Muhammad-i-Hafiz-i-Shirazi*, 2 vols (Calcutta: Government of India, 1891)
- D. F. Mulla, *Seventy-Five Odes of Hafiz* (Bombay: Education Society, 1891)
- Justin Huntly McCarthy, *Ghazels from the Divan of Hafiz* (London: Nutt, 1893)
- Krishnalal Jhaveri, *Divan-e-Hafez* (Bombay: Cooper, 1895-97)
- Moulvi Syed Sirajuddin, *Translation and Notes of Hafiz’ Odes* (Poona: Israelite Press, 1896)
- Gertrude Bell, *Poems from the Divan of Hafiz* (London: Heinemann, 1897)
- Walter Leaf, *Versions from Hafiz* (London: Grant Richards, 1898)
- John Payne, *The Poems of Shemseddin Mohammed Hafiz of Shiraz*, 3 vols (London: Villon Society, 1901)
- Richard Le Gallienne, *Odes from the Divan of Hafiz* (New York: privately printed, 1903; London: Duckworth, 1905)
- *Hafiz: the Prince of Persian Lyric Poets* (New York: F. A. Stokes, 1906) – reprint of William Jones
- Syed Abdul Majid and Launcelot Cranmer-Byng, *The Rubáiyát of Háfiz* (London: John Murray, 1910) – ‘Wisdom of the East’ series.<sup>42</sup>

In total, at least fourteen book-length English translations from Hafiz were issued between 1875 (Bicknell) and 1910 (Majid and Cranmer-Byng), with nine of those appearing after 1890. By the end of this period Joseph Jacobs, in his preface to a 1911 reissue of Costello's *Rose Garden*, felt he could write that Hafiz – as well as Firdausi and Omar Khayyam – had ‘become in a measure household words among lovers of poetry in England’.<sup>43</sup> But whether this intensive attention over the course of some thirty-five years had helped to clarify the rich and complex originals for general readers is very much open to question. One could argue that understanding has instead been obstructed by an ever-growing mesh of cliché and second-hand knowledge. As Roger Sedarat has pointed out, the *ghazals* are frequently multivocal, with Hafiz sometimes addressing the reader, or being addressed himself by a mysterious voice of conscience or reason. The Victorian mode of dramatic verse might have offered a powerful tool for reproducing this effect in English, but ironically it is only in Clarke that any move in this direction may be detected.<sup>44</sup> His amateur colleagues generally exhibit the preference established by European Romanticism for a single lyric voice: an ingrained bias reflected as much in Le Gallienne's attempt to elide the poet's personality with his own Decadent celebrity, as in Bell's elegant free verse, which in its turn points toward modernist trends and the style adopted in present-day popularizations like Daniel Ladinsky's *I Heard God Laughing* (2006).<sup>45</sup>

Meisami expresses grave doubt as to whether Hafiz will ever find a satisfactory translator in English. In her view, his legacy has endured ‘a power struggle between various agents and agencies operating under specific constraints in which the poet figures as a pawn, and the poems themselves become, increasingly, irrelevant’.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, even if Hafiz's contending interpreters have sown confusion, they have also presented readers with a multiplicity of choices, which enabled his influence to be felt in twentieth-century poetry untrammelled by the impress (as became the case with Omar Khayyam) of one dominant translator. This is well illustrated by the variety of writing loosely inspired by Hafiz in the early twentieth century, which ranges from the humorous and whimsical to the sententious and elegiac, and takes in such writers as Kipling, Basil Bunting, Robert Lowell, Robert Graves, James Elroy Flecker and, most notably, Elizabeth Bridges's striking *Sonnets from Hafiz* of 1921. The very fact that Bridges ventured to derive *sonnets* – a form in which Hafiz of course never wrote – exemplifies the kind of creative deviation from established norms enabled by the multiplicity and decentredness that characterize the writing, as well as the reading, of Hafiz in English. The poet's many faces – romantic, hedonistic, satirical and spiritual

– also speak in turn and show to advantage in the witty *Don and the Dervish* (1911) of Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, who sometimes imitated the monorhyme of the *ghazal* and at other points substituted more conventional English forms.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the key development within the period this article has surveyed was the evolution of an open market in Persian translation. In the 1810s readers deferred to a select group of established interpreters – just one of the East India Company’s enviable monopolies – but by the 1910s most major texts were served by a variety of English versions appealing to different interest groups and price brackets. There is some irony in this situation: mid-century popularizers may have felt that Hafiz’s perceived lyrical qualities made him more easily assimilable to English poetic tradition (and thus entitled them to adapt him for this milieu). Yet it was the *Gulistan* and the *Shahnameh* that fell more readily into generic categories familiar to the European reader, whereas Hafiz in all his diverse strains, though he has thoroughly permeated the general field of cultural reference in the West, has remained tantalizingly elusive. And thus the potential, at least, remains for his continued re-emergence, re-migration, and re-appropriation in the future.

This is not to recommend the nineteenth-century popularizers as models for future translators – certainly not Le Gallienne, whose attitude to the source text is cynical and even at times derogatory. But as objects of study, we overlook them to our detriment. In conclusion, it is worth considering what this dissimilar medley – one might even say confusion – of responses can tell us not merely about translation but about the development of English lyric more broadly. The history of Persian translation into English has been accompanied by a significant change in what we desire from lyric (most significantly, a shift from poetry with a social or rhetorical function, like courtly love lyric or Pindaric ode, to the expectation that lyric should disclose the interior self of the poet). Consequently, it has also coincided with the sustained critical attempt to formulate lyric attributes, in a debate largely shaped by the Romantic theory of lyric put forward by Hegel in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*. For Hegel, lyric is an expression of subjectivity, and yet the self – in a position fundamental to his philosophy – is not an ‘autonomous’ entity, but is rather ‘constituted in its relation to others’.<sup>48</sup> This posed a problem for his aesthetic theory: did lyric emerge from a poet’s exploration of himself, or from his contemplation of external objects? Moreover, to extend the question to poetry’s function: did it principally serve the poet himself, by liberating his subjectivity and giving vent to his emotions? Or was a lyric poet properly a bard, addressing themes of broader social concern? It was Hegel’s reading of Goethe’s *West-östlicher Divan* that gave him a model



whereby these two aspects might co-exist. The poet's heart and consciousness, absorbed in the contemplation of an object, he suggests, may 'make out of the object something new, beautiful and intrinsically valuable'. Hegel calls this synthesis 'objective humour', and for him it is exemplified by Persian lyric.<sup>49</sup>

Hegel returns us to where we began, with German translation and poetry, and he poses an array of complex questions that cannot be satisfactorily answered here. However, in this article I have argued that we would better understand Hafiz's influence on English writing by scrutinizing the popular transmission of his poetry – paying heed both to the practices of translators and to the responses of readers – and I would reiterate that point now. Popular circulation often relies on a perceived mutuality of genre: readers often wish to understand Persian poetry with reference to familiar generic categories, and translators or editors like Costello answer this need by drawing analogies between the *ghazals* of Hafiz, the *odes* of Anacreon, and the 'songs' and 'national airs' of Moore. This generic focus is reflected in the titles of the dozen books listed above, four of which refer to 'odes', one to 'ghazels' and one to 'lyric'. Only one title cites a verse-form ('rubáiyát'), and yet academic scholarship has generally been more interested in showing how English poetry has been enriched by borrowing metres, stanzas, tropes and imagery from Persian or Arabic literature than by interacting with generic characteristics, which are assumed to remain bound to their cultural context. As Jonathan Culler points out, Hegel, and much of the theoretical impetus that follows him, represents an attempt to recast lyric as a genre, and Hegel's difficulties stem from trying to find a definition sufficiently copious to reconcile its diverse subjective and objective bents. If we accept Culler's defence of genre theory, though, as a mode of thinking that permits 'exploration of [lyric's] historical tradition, making salient its discursive strategies and possibilities in a range of periods and languages', then Hegel's difficulties may prompt us to pay greater attention to those translators who are so ready to draw such historical comparisons and analogies.<sup>50</sup> To take our final provocation from Costello, we might observe that Moore is just one of two points of reference in her editorial notes. Her second was the troubadours, who had been the subject of her first foray into anthologizing, *Specimens of the Early Poetry of France* (1835). She was not the only popular translator of Hafiz to share an interest in medieval French poetry. Le Gallienne published prose versions of French verse romances, and a collection of original poetry, *A Jongleur Strayed*. John Payne founded the Villon Society, and published both his translations of

the French poet and of Hafiz under its imprint. And the orientalist E.J.W. Gibb self-consciously blended two traditions in 1902, by composing a tribute to Hafiz in the form of a villanelle. Therefore, both Costello and Le Gallienne were exploring multiple foreign literatures as part of their investment in the idea of lyric as genre, with all the rhetorical conventions and artificiality that genre connotes. Both were attending consciously to poets who articulate lyric personae—or ‘character’, to use Costello’s word—while operating within a complex generic framework, long before the sense of lyric as intrinsically performative language (rather than a simple and sincere outpouring of the poetic self) prompted Ezra Pound to make a similar, much more famous turn toward Persian poetry, the troubadours, Old English and eventually Chinese lyric. Though slight influence may be accorded to Costello individually, from attending to the wider cohort of nineteenth-century popular translators, and their readers, we stand to gain many overlooked examples of lyric being theorized and discussed within an expansive, unfenced domain of possible intertexts.

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<sup>1</sup> Parvin Loloi, *Hafiz, Master of Persian Poetry: a Critical Bibliography* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> John D. Yohannan, *Persian Poetry in England and America: a 200 Year History* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1977), p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Yohannan, *Persian Poetry*, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Julie Scott Meisami, ‘Hafiz in English: Translation and Authority’, *Edebiyât*, VI/1 (1995), 55-79 (p. 74).

<sup>5</sup> Yohannan, *Persian Poetry*, pp. 116, 343-348.

<sup>6</sup> *A General Catalogue of Books, Offered to the Public at the Affixed Prices* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1880) and *Catalogue of Works in the Oriental Languages together with Polynesian & African* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1887). Consulted at the library of the Grolier Club in New York.

<sup>7</sup> Wilfred S. Dowden, ed., *The Journal of Thomas Moore*, 6 vols (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1983-1991), VI, 2354.

<sup>8</sup> *The Best Hundred Books, by the Best Judges* (London: Pall Mall Gazette, 1886), p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Meisami, ‘Hafiz in English’, p. 60.

<sup>10</sup> Annmarie Drury, ‘Translation’, in *The Encyclopaedia of Victorian Literature*, edited by Dino Felluga, Pamela K. Gilbert and Linda K. Hughes, 4 vols (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), IV, 1628.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> For a full discussion of her life and work, see Clare Broome Saunders, *Louisa Stuart Costello: a Nineteenth-Century Writing Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> British Library, Mss Eur E301/9 (Louisa Stuart Costello to HH Wilson, 23 Feb 1845).

<sup>14</sup> Lord Teignmouth, ed., *The Works of Sir William Jones*, 13 vols (London: John Stockdale, 1807), III, 247.

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- <sup>15</sup> Louisa Stuart Costello, *The Rose Garden of Persia* (London: Longman, 1845), pp. 107-108.
- <sup>16</sup> James Atkinson, *The Sháh Námeḥ of the Persian Poet Firdausí* (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1832), pp. v-vi.
- <sup>17</sup> Costello, *Rose Garden*, pp. 119, xii, 109.
- <sup>18</sup> A. H. Japp, 'The Late E. H. Palmer', *Academy*, 581, 23 Jun 1883, p. 439.
- <sup>19</sup> My italics. Given the availability of German editions, this may have been a misprint for 'popular and complete'.  
**See note 22.**
- <sup>20</sup> Herman Bicknell, *Háfiz of Shíráz: Selections from his Poems* (London: Trübner, 1875).
- <sup>21</sup> See the Burton documents at the Huntington Library, spread across three separate collections. mssRBL 1-139 (Richard Francis Burton Library Manuscripts Collections). Box 10 contains an exercise book in which Burton has drafted various Hafiz translations. mssRFB 1-1386 (Sir Richard Francis Burton papers), Box 44 contains Burton's bookbills and correspondence with Nicholas Trübner relating to Palmer's prospectus for 'The Odes of Hafiz'. The prospectus itself is tipped into Burton's copy of Bicknell (Huntington Library, classmark 634686).
- <sup>22</sup> Harry Ransom Centre, University of Texas: MS-0126/Sir Edwin Arnold Collection, 1.5 (commonplace book).
- <sup>23</sup> British Library: Mss Eur F134/79 (memorandum sent by Clarke to Sir Frederic Goldsmid).
- <sup>24</sup> Richard Le Gallienne, *Odes from the Divan of Hafiz, freely rendered from literal translations* (London: Duckworth, 1905), p. xv.
- <sup>25</sup> Harry Ransom Centre, University of Texas: MS-2412/Richard Le Gallienne Collection, 5.14, (Justin H. McCarthy to Le Gallienne, 20 Jul 1901).
- <sup>26</sup> Meisami, 'Hafiz in English', p. 55.
- <sup>27</sup> *Telegraph* (New York), 29 Oct 1903, 'Le Gallienne Here to Escape Asthma'.
- <sup>28</sup> H. Wilberforce Clarke, *The Dīvān, written in the fourteenth century, by Khwāja Shamsu-d-dīn Muḥammad-i-Ḥāfiz-i-Shīrāzī*, 2 vols (Calcutta: Government of India Central Printing Office), I, 126.
- <sup>29</sup> Le Gallienne, *Odes*, p. 35.
- <sup>30</sup> Temple University: (RARE) PR 4881 A16 HafO 1925x, *Odes from the Divan of Hafiz* (Boston: L.C. Page for the St Botolph Society, 1925). The annotations are not with certainty Ellis's: they may have been made by a prior owner.
- <sup>31</sup> (RARE) PR 4881 A16 HafO 1903x – *Odes from the Divan of Hafiz* (Boston: Heintzemann, 1903).
- <sup>32</sup> 'Talk on Omar Khayyam', *St Paul Globe*, 23 Jan 1901; H. Montgomery Hyde, 'Richard Le Gallienne: Poet of the 'Nineties', *The Listener*, 16 Oct 1947.
- <sup>33</sup> Robert A. Schanke, *Shattered Applause: the Lives of Eva Le Gallienne* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), p. 18.
- <sup>34</sup> Loloi, *Hafiz*, p. 58.
- <sup>35</sup> The Kettaneh Group survives to this day: < <http://www.kettaneh.com/group/profile> > [accessed 31 Aug 2018].
- <sup>36</sup> *Publishers' Weekly*, XLIV/21 (1893), p. 120.
- <sup>37</sup> Adam Talib, 'Le Gallienne's Paraphrase and the Limits of Translation', in *FitzGerald's Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám: Popularity and Neglect*, edited by Adrian Poole et al (London: Anthem Press, 2011), p. 179.

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<sup>38</sup> Yohannan, *Persian Poetry*, p. 196.

<sup>39</sup> Pramatha Chaudhuri to Indira Devi, 22 Sept 1898, published in *Visva-Bharati News*, XXXVII/2 (Sept 1968), p. 70.

<sup>40</sup> Prospectus for *Odes from the Divan of Hafiz* (Portland, ME: Mosher, 1902). See Houghton Library, Harvard: bMS Am 1096/859 (Richard Le Gallienne to Thomas Bird Mosher), 3 Dec 1902.

<sup>41</sup> *The Rubá'iyat of Háfız, translated with introduction by Syed Abdul Majid, rendered into English verse by L. Cranmer-Byng* (London: John Murray, 1910), pp. 7, 21.

<sup>42</sup> This list is derived from Loloi's detailed bibliography in *Hafiz*, pp. 381-387.

<sup>43</sup> Louisa Stuart Costello, *The Rose Garden of Persia* (London: Giddings, 1911), p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Roger Sedarat, 'A Victorian Hafez?: (Re)reading the *Divan* in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', *Metamorphoses: a Journal of Literary Translation*, XVIII.1 (Spring 2010), 210-212.

<sup>45</sup> Daniel Ladinsky, *I Heard God Laughing: Renderings of Hafiz* (Walnut Creek, CA: Sufism Reinterpreted, 1996) and *The Subject Tonight is Love: 60 Wild and Sweet Poems of Hafiz* (North Myrtle Beach, SC: Pumpkin House Press, 1997).

<sup>46</sup> Meisami, 'Hafiz in English', pp. 72-73.

<sup>47</sup> Loloi, *Hafiz*, p. 65.

<sup>48</sup> Scott Brewster, *Lyric* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 85.

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Jonathan Culler, *Theory of the Lyric* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2015), p. 101.

<sup>50</sup> Culler, *Theory of the Lyric*, p. 90.